

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **Fruitful Labor John 4:39-42**

Most of you know that we are in a building program. The design of that building is now being formalized and will be presented to you as soon as it is completed. And when it is completed it will more than double the capacity of our current auditorium.

Will we be able to fill this building at some point in the future? This depends on whether we see the world as Christ sees the world. And how does Christ see the world? A grainfield! This is how Christ sees the world. He sees the world as a field ready to be harvested. This is what He clearly communicated in **John 4:35**.

And this is how we need to see the world. When you see your unsaved mother or father, when you see your unsaved brother or sister, when you see your unsaved child, when you see your unsaved neighbor, when you see your unsaved co-worker, when you see anyone who you believe is unsaved, we should see them as a field ready to be harvested. This does not mean that we have to immediately present the gospel to them, but it does mean that we will never see our relationship with them apart from the gospel of Christ and their future salvation.

Is this how you see the world around you? Hopefully your answer is yes. Hopefully you see this world as ready to be harvested. Hopefully you see this world filled with people ready to come to Christ. And if we together see the world in this way, we will be in a good position to fill any building that we might build.

I know that seeing the world in this way can be somewhat difficult at times. Especially after you have tried to get involved in God's harvest field and have not seen immediate results. But just because we may not immediately see the results it does not change the fact that our work is having an impact and will continue to have an impact, as we stay involved in this extremely important work.

But in order to stay involved we will need to be encouraged from time to time. And this brings us back to **John 4:31-42** and to the question that we have been asking. What are *four* major features of Christ's work outlined for us in John 4:31-42? What is the first major feature that we noticed?

The first major feature of Christ's work is the proper *motive*. And what motivated Christ to do what He did? What motivated Christ to do what He did was His desire to do the will of His Father and accomplish His work? This is what motivated Christ. We saw this in **John 4:31-34**. And hopefully this is what will also motivate us.

What is the second major feature of Christ's work? The second major feature of Christ's work is the *urgency* associated with reaping God's harvest (John 4:35-36). Christ was not just motivated to do the will of His Father and accomplish His work, He felt a real urgency to do the will of the father and accomplish His work and more specifically He felt a real urgency to do the will of the Father and to accomplish His work in the area of reaping the fields that were white unto harvest.

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We saw this in **John 4:35-36**. What was the third major feature of Christ's work?

The third major feature of Christ's work is *joy* (John 4:36). There will be a shared sense of joy when the harvest field is reaped on the part of all those who labored in the fields. The work of harvesting souls is an exciting and joyful work. We will in now way be shortchanged when we choose to become involved. We will be abundantly blessed. We saw this at the end of **John 4:36**.

But this is not all. Now we come to the fourth and last major feature of Christ's work in God's harvest field. The fourth major feature of Christ's work is *fruitfulness* (John 4:39-42).

Christ expected when He and others went into God's harvest field that they would be totally successful. He did not anticipate failure, and neither should we. We need to have this very same positive attitude when we commit ourselves to this work whether we are seeking to prepare the ground to receive the seed of God's Word, or when we plant God's seed, or when we see the opportunity to call an individual to make a decision. **John 4:39-42**, the passage that we will be looking at this weekend, certainly reinforces what I have just said.

Let us begin to examine this passage by looking at **verse 39**, "**And from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, 'He told me all the things that I have done.'**"

Because the woman that Jesus met at the well was willing to share her testimony with the men in Sychar many Samaritans chose to believe in Him. This is what the passage tells us.

But in what sense did they believe? Was it simply an acknowledgment that what she said about Jesus was true or was it more than that? When the Apostle John tells us that many Samaritans believed "in Him" in John 4:39 it meant that they were willing to entrust themselves to Him as their *Messiah*.

This might appear on the surface rather absurd that these men would have been willing to take this step of faith so quickly, but based on the specific words of this verse this is exactly what happened.

What do I mean by the specific words of this verse. Let us look once again at **verse 39**. What did the apostle say? Did he say, "**And from that city many of the Samaritans believed what the woman said about Him.**" This is not what the apostle said. What the apostle said was, "**And from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him.**"

The words "in Him" are the same words the Apostle John chose to use in *John 3:16* as He reflected on the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus. What were those words "**For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.**" The Samaritan men after listening to the woman's testimony did not choose simply to believe something about Jesus rather they chose to believe in Jesus. Or in other words they chose to entrust themselves to Him as their Messiah.

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How could they have done this based solely on the word of the Samaritan woman? How could they do this based solely on her testimony? I don't believe that it was.

John the Baptist had recently been ministering in the area of Samaria. We have already discussed this when we were examining **John 3:23**. What did this verse say? "**And John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and they were coming and were being baptized.**" Where is this place? Aenon is located in Samaria.

What message was John the Baptist proclaiming as Jews came to Him for baptism? "**Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" John the Baptist made it very clear that the Kingdom of God was coming and that the King was already among them. I know that the Samaritans did not believe in prophets, but they certainly were aware of John the Baptist and they were also aware of how the Jewish people viewed Him. Because of His ministry in Samaria they would have known that John the Baptist was representing the Messiah as having come.

Therefore the Samaritans might have been saying to themselves as Jews came to John for baptism, "If John the Baptist truly is a prophet, then let him show us the Messiah." Right on cue, who shows up on their doorstep? The Samaritan woman and what does she do? She encourages them to go out to the man who had shared with her all the things that she had done. After doing this she concludes her testimony with this question, "**This is not the Christ is it?**"

After listening to these final words of the woman you might conclude that the Samaritan woman had not yet concluded that Jesus was the Messiah, but as we noted several weeks ago based on **John 4:42** this is not true. She very much believed that Jesus was the Messiah and her personal faith in Jesus as the Messiah, though perhaps not clearly stated, was certainly clearly on display for the Samaritan men to observe.

When you put the ministry of John the Baptist together with the testimony of the woman and her obvious faith the response of the men does *not* seem all that absurd. Certainly it was no more absurd than what I did when I chose to entrust myself to Christ at First Baptist Church in Compton, California over 50 years ago. Even though, from my memory, it was the first time I had heard the gospel message, and even though I was hearing it from a man I had never met. God had orchestrated all the events of my life prior to that evening in such a way that my heart was moved to embrace Christ as my Lord and Savior.

So, what have we learned in **John 4:39**? When the Apostle John tells us that many Samaritans believed "in Him" in **John 4:39** it meant that they were willing to entrust themselves to Him as their Messiah.

When we think about the task of becoming involved in God's harvest field we need to be very optimistic about people coming to faith in Christ (John 15:16). I believe this was true of the Samaritan woman. Let me ask you as question. Was this Samaritan woman optimistic when she initially approached the men of Sychar? I would have to believe that she was. If she wasn't I don't believe that she ever would have done this, and this is the point I am trying to make. The fields that are ready to be harvested will not be harvested until we actually see our participation in that harvest as potentially effective.

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How do we know this? Not only because He has sent us into those fields but He has also told us that we will in fact bear fruit as we go. Listen to **John 15:16**. "**You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.**" This is an amazing thing. Christ is telling us if we go into God's harvest field we will bear fruit. He is telling us that people will in fact come to faith in Christ because we have been willing to till the soil, plant the seed and harvest the crop.

But don't think that you can do this without prayer. Let us go back to **John 15:16** but this time let us read the entire verse. What does it say? "**You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.**" When we think about the task of becoming involved in God's harvest field we need to be very optimistic about people coming to faith in Christ only if we pray (John 15:16).

Do you see this world and the souls of men as a field ready to be harvested? Are you optimistic when you go into those fields to reap that harvest? You should be if you are making prayer the centerpiece of your efforts.

So what happened after these Samaritan men came out to visit with Jesus? Let us read the next verse. "**So when the Samaritans came to Him, they were asking Him to stay with them.**" When the Samaritans came to Jesus they came to Him as new believers and did not want Him to go so they were continuously asking Him to stay.

They had one thing on their mind and that was to keep Him with them. The Samaritan men who had entrusted themselves to Jesus as their Messiah did not want Him to leave. This makes perfect sense.

Were they successful in getting Jesus to stay with them? Let us continue to read the verse. "**So when the Samaritans came to Him, they were asking Him to stay with them and He stayed there two days.**"

This certainly is not consistent with the instruction Christ would later give to His disciples in **Matthew 10:5-6** prior to His death. Let me read this passage for you. "**These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."** Even though it might not be consistent with what He would later say to His disciples prior to His death, it was very consistent with what He would later say to His disciples after His death in His post-resurrection ministry. Let me read for you **Acts 1:8**, "**But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.**"

Until the rejection of the Messiah by Israel was complete the disciples would limit their activities to Jews, but after Israel crucified their Messiah and the church was born the whole world would become their sphere of ministry. Jesus two-day stay in Samaria with His disciples was therefore a little taste of the future and what would take place after the birth of the church.

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After this two-day stay with the Samaritans then what happened? Let me read for you **John 4:41**, **"And many more believed because of His word."** The group of Samaritans that came to faith because of the Word of Jesus was greater than the number of Samaritans who came to faith through the word of the woman (John 4:41). And not just a few more, but the text says "many more." The Samaritan woman, through her testimony to the men in Sychar, in effect had thrown a stone into the water and the ripples created by that stone impacted a great many more.

And the "many more" Samaritans who came to faith through the words of Jesus acknowledged the strategic role that the woman played in their new found faith in John 4:42.

Let me read this verse for you. **"And they (the many more who had believed through the word of Christ) were saying to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you have said that we believe, for we have heard ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.'"**

This particular group of Samaritans, the "many more," had apparently believed certain things about Jesus based on the testimony of the woman, but they had not come to the point where they had chosen to personally believe in Jesus. It would appear that they were unprepared to do this until they were able to consider the words of Christ for themselves.

This should not surprise us. Certainly there are people out there who based on our testimony alone may choose to place their faith in Christ. But there are many others who will need to contemplate the words of Christ, or in other words, the Scriptures before they are able to place their faith in Christ and embrace Him as their Savior.

As they do this what will they be able to acknowledge? Let us consider the words of these Samaritans who came to faith. This is why it is so very important for us in addition to our testimony to be able to share the gospel from the Scriptures clearly with people who come across our path. Hopefully you are prepared to do this. If you are not prepared to share the gospel clearly from the Scriptures then we need to get prepared.

If we are faithful to share our testimony, and if we are faithful to share a clear biblical presentation of the gospel with those that God brings across our path then we will bear fruit. We will participate in the harvest. What will those who come to Christ know about Him? Let us once again read **John 4:42**. **"And they (the many more who had believed through the word of Christ) were saying to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you have said that we believe, for we have heard ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.'"**

The Samaritans in **John 4:42** refer to Jesus as the Savior of the world. This is an unusual phrase, which occurs in only one other place in the New Testament (**1 John 4:14**). It parallels **John 3:17** **"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him."**

Because Jesus the Messiah embraced the Samaritans and extended to them the gift of living water they knew that He was not simply the Savior of the Jews but of the world.

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### CONCLUSION

Lord willing, we will in the near future have a building that will double our present seating capacity. Will we be able to fill it? It first of all depends upon how we see the world around us? Hopefully we will see the world around us, as Christ saw the world around Him, as a field ready to be harvested.

Hopefully this is how we will see the world. If it is hopefully we will prayerfully become involved with all those that God brings across our path seeking to lovingly and sensitively bring to embrace Jesus the Savior of the world.

If we commit ourselves to do this we should expect that souls will be harvested. Certainly we would not have to convince the Samaritan woman of this. Nobody knows how *many* sinners have come to the Savior because of the witness of this woman recorded in John 4.